Financing of elections

750. SHRI DINKARRAO GOVINDRAO PATIL:

SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER:

SHRI SURESH PACHOURI.

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposal under their consideration for public financing of elections or public funding of political parties to ensure cleaner elections to Lok Sabha and Assemblies, if so, the details thereof;

(b) by when the proposal would be given effect to;

(c) whether a number of suggestions have been obtained from the various parties; and

(d) if so, by what time the final decision for funding the poll will be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (d) There is no proposal under consideration at present for State funding of elections The Election Commission has only suggested that the election expenditure may be shared partly in kind through supply of free copies of rolls, free mailing of election literature, etc. The Commission has reiterated this view recently and suggested that in the existing circumstances public financing of elections may be only in kind. In making this suggestion, the Election Commission has taken note of the views of the various political parties. The suggestion of the Commission is still under examination and it is not feasible at this stage to indicate the time frame by which a final decision in the matter could be arrived at.

Supply of newsprint to newspapers

751. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether representations have been received by Governmnt from the Indian and Eastern Newspapers Society regarding recent steep hike in the price of newsprint cuasing an unbearable burden on the newspapers;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether the working of the public sector units manufacturing newsprint had been thoroughly investigated before deciding to increase the price of newsprint;

(d) if so, what is the outcome of the investigations; and

(e) what measures are proposed to be taken by Government to ensure supply of adequate quantities of newsprint to the newspapers at reasonable prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) and (b) Representations have been received from the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society stating that the recent increase in the price of indigenous newsprint has adversely affected the economic viability of the newspaper industry, and that it should be withdrawn.

(c) and (d) The claims of the indigenous newsprint manufacturers for revision of their ex-mill prices on account of the escalations in the cost of raw materials and other inputs were got examined by the BICP before Government decided to permit the price increase. A large part of the escalations in costs claimed by the manufacturers was on account of the increases in royalties, hikes in power raw materials and related taxes, increases in royalties, hikes in power rates and increases in tax on self-